

The New Defense Secretary Thinks Like the President

By PATRICK ANDERSON

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CLARK CLIFFORD, the Washington lawyer/legend President Johnson has picked to be his new Secretary of Defense, is a man of whom one must speak in superlatives. For example:

He is Bernard Baruch's successor as this century's most durable adviser to Presidents, having been Harry Truman's Special Counsel in 1946-50, a friend and attorney to John Kennedy, and now an intimate counselor to Lyndon Johnson.

He is widely regarded as the most influential advocate within the President's inner circle of a hard-line, hawk policy in Vietnam. Beyond the Vietnam issue, Clifford is demonstrably one of the toughest, least illusioned political strategists in Washington's history, and his new job probably won't prevent him from playing a behind-the-scenes role in shaping Johnson's campaign plans this fall.

Clifford has probably made more money from the practice of law than any other lawyer in Washington, perhaps in the nation. He rarely enters a courtroom, but he has become a multimillionaire because many of the nation's richest corporations believe he can do more to advance their interests in Washington than any other lawyer.

The 61-year-old Clifford is one of the most elegant men alive. Tall, handsome, always beautifully attired, courtly and charming in the old-school Southern manner, Clifford is one of those rare public figures, like John Kennedy, whose dazzling exterior does much to detract from the fact that he has a mind like a steel trap.

Clifford now seems sure to emerge as the strongest figure in the Johnson Cabinet. He has the confidence of the President, he has excellent relationships with Congressional leaders, and he brings to his new job a self-confidence that springs from long experience with the Defense Department. In 1947, as Truman's Special Counsel, he was instrumental in the creation of the Defense Department; two years later he wrote the legislation that strengthened the Secretary of De-

fense's control over the military. In 1960 he served on a task force which urged President-elect Kennedy to increase the degree of civilian control over the military and to move toward eventual unification of the armed services. He has admired Robert McNamara's strong civilian control of the Pentagon and his systems-analysis approach to decision-making, and he hopes to go even further on both fronts.

On the crucial issue of Vietnam, Clifford carries with him to the Pentagon an exceedingly hard-line philosophy. In recent months, viewing himself as a private adviser to the President, Clifford has avoided public pronouncements on Vietnam. But it is possible to present his views with some certainty, after sounding out his close associates and persons who have attended White House policy sessions with him.

Clifford, it must be said, is no militarist, savoring war for war's sake. He once declared of the Vietnam conflict: "I would give everything I have—I would give my right arm—to see us out of there." But he most emphatically believes that the way out in Vietnam lies not through bombing pauses or peace overtures but through military pres-



sure that will bring North Vietnam to its knees. When Hanoi is convinced that the U.S. will "stay the course" in Vietnam, and decides that "the game is not worth the candle," then the war will end, he believes, probably not through negotiations but simply through a gradual lessening of hostilities. These beliefs led Clifford to oppose the Christmas, 1965, bombing pause, and they no doubt lead him to take an extremely skeptical view of the apparent peace feelers emanating from Hanoi in recent weeks.

Clifford views the war in Vietnam as a test of the national will, and warns that if the U.S. lets South Vietnam go "down the drain," we will just have to fight the Communists elsewhere. Clifford's arguments on Vietnam are laced with historical references. He quotes Grover Cleveland's declaration to his Cabinet: "Gentlemen, we're faced with a condition, not a theory." He makes frequent references to Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler in the late nineteen-thirties. (And he sometimes declares, "If we pull out of South Vietnam there will be the most incredible blood bath since Hitler killed 6 million Jews.")

Most important, Clifford sees a direct analogy between the challenge facing President Johnson in South-east Asia today and the Communist challenges President Truman faced during the postwar years in Western Europe, Greece, Turkey and finally Korea. Clifford's view of international politics was formed in those historic years, when he was a junior member of a foreign-policy team that included such towering figures as George C. Marshall, Dean Acheson and James V. Forrestal, and he sees no reason why the precepts of the late nineteen-forties should not apply to the challenges of the late nineteen-sixties.

A GOOD statement of Clifford's long-range view of international politics is embodied in a 70-page memorandum he wrote for President Truman on the state of U. S. relations with Russia. Just a few months earlier, Truman had read the historic, 8,000-word telegram George Kennan had dispatched from Moscow on the nature of Russia's postwar ambitions. Truman, however, wanted an appraisal that was more broadly based, and was the work of

someone he knew. So he assigned Clifford to prepare an evaluation on the basis of talks with dozens of Administration officials, including Dean Acheson, James Forrestal, George Marshall and Robert Lovett.

Clifford submitted his memorandum to Truman on Sept. 24, 1946. It began:

"The gravest problem facing the U.S. today is that of American relations with the Soviet Union. The solution of that problem may determine whether or not there will be a third world war. Soviet leaders appear to be conducting their nation on a course of aggrandizement designed to lead to eventual world domination by the U.S.S.R. Their goal, and their policies designed to reach it, are in direct conflict with American ideals, and the United States has not yet been able to persuade Stalin and his associates that world peace and prosperity lie not in the direction in which the Soviet Union is moving, but in the opposite direction of international cooperation and friendship. . . .

"The key to an understanding of current Soviet foreign policy is the realization that Soviet leaders adhere to the Marxist theory of the

ultimate destruction of capitalist states by Communist states."

Next, documenting his charges, Clifford devoted 30 pages to Russia's postwar takeovers in Eastern Europe, her violations of various postwar agreements, her growing worldwide espionage network, and her military buildup.

Given this aggressive policy, Clifford asserted, "It is highly dangerous to conclude that hope of international peace lies only in 'accord,' 'mutual understanding' or 'solidarity' with the Soviet Union."

Here was the heart of Clifford's memorandum: "The language of military power is the only language which disciples of power politics understand. The United States must use that language in order that Soviet leaders will realize that our Government is determined to uphold the interests of its citizens and the rights of small nations. Compromise and concessions are considered by the Soviets to be evidence of weakness."

That paragraph stands today as an excellent summary of Clifford's views on the challenge in Vietnam and the way the U.S. must deal with it. The

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parallel Clifford draws between today's problems and those of the postwar era is, of course, one that is challenged by many students of foreign policy who believe that the world and the Communist threat have changed a great deal in the past 20 years. Clifford's critics can say, as one journalist put it, "His trouble is he thinks we're fighting in Korea again." Clifford's answer to that would be, yes, we are—the challenge is the same and the response must be the same.

CLIFFORD'S thoughts on Vietnam are shared by many other prominent figures at the State Department, the Pentagon, Congress and elsewhere. What makes Clifford's views important is his intimacy with Johnson, his new role as boss of the Pentagon, and the possibility that, as national opposition to the war increases, Clifford is the man who is doing most to reassure the President that his policy of continued military escalation is right, and will be viewed as right by generations to come.

Johnson and Clifford have known one another for 20 years—they first met in 1948 when Johnson, a young Congressman running for the Senate, scrambled aboard Truman's campaign train in Texas—but their intimacy has grown only since Johnson became President. There had, in fact, been a touch of coolness between them, at least on Johnson's part, in the late nineteen-fifties when Clifford backed his friend Senator Stuart Symington for the 1960 Democratic Presidential nomination which Johnson coveted.

But one evening during Johnson's first week in the Presidency he summoned Clifford to the White House for what became a five-hour talk. Johnson wanted the guidance of someone who had worked in the White House under Truman and been an adviser on governmental matters to Kennedy. But from their political discussions there soon arose a warm personal relationship. Clifford and Johnson are contemporaries, with many friends and political memories in common. Johnson knew Clifford was a man whose discretion is absolute; as one of their associates says, "For the President to tell Clark a secret is like dropping it down a well."

Clifford is not as close to Johnson personally as such old friends as Justice Abe Fortas or Washington lawyer James Rowe, but today there

often calls on for advice and assistance. For at least the past year, Clifford has been spending more than half his time working on assignments from the President. These involve not only foreign policy and Vietnam, but political, economic and legislative matters, and occasional speech-writing or editing.

In his role as Presidential adviser, Clifford has not been merely a high-level kibitzer; in preparing for policy sessions at the White House he has spent hours reading Government cables, memoranda and classified files to brief himself for in-depth discussions. At times his law office in a penthouse suite across Lafayette Park from the White House, has become virtually an extension of the executive offices, with Clifford and various of his four law partners hard at work backing up the Presidential staff on this or that current crisis.

His status as Washington's top corporation lawyer enabled Clifford to operate behind the scenes as an invaluable emissary to the corporate world for President Johnson—as he did earlier for Kennedy. In 1962, when Kennedy neared a showdown with the steel industry over its price increases, he dispatched Clifford along with Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg to negotiate with the steel executives. Afterward, Kennedy told his friend Paul Fay:

"If any one person deserves the credit for having the steel companies see the light, it has to be Clark Clifford. Since he represents so many of them here in Washington, he has immediate entree. Can't you just see Clifford outlining the possible courses of action the Government could take if they showed signs of not moving?"

A few months ago, as Johnson fought to get his tax increase through Congress, he called on Clifford to help pull together a committee of prominent business executives, most of them Clifford's law clients, to support the tax boost.

Johnson respects Clifford's governmental experience and his financial success—which he sometimes cites as proof of Clifford's good judgment—but at bottom their relationship rests on the fact that, despite superficial differences, they are much alike. Johnson is histrionic and high-powered, Clifford soft-voiced and subtle, but they share the same ultra-pragmatic approach to poli-

tical says, comparing Clifford's influence with that of Justice Fortas:

"The President has greater respect for Clark's political judgment than he does for Abe's. He admires Abe's warm, human qualities, but he knows Abe's heart is on fire with liberal causes, so he discounts his advice accordingly. The President likes to get advice from men like Clark who are cold and shrewd and aren't swayed by moralistic arguments. The President knows that Clark understands the nature of the Presidency—that a President may sometimes do what is right but he must always do what is necessary."

FOR all their rapport, the Clifford-Johnson relationship seems to be a delicate one, with Clifford acutely aware of the President's sensitivities. No one who knows Clifford doubts that he very badly wanted the appointment as either Secretary of Defense or Secretary of State. But for more than a year Clifford has been applying his considerable persuasive ability to discourage newspaper and magazine articles about himself, lest he seem to be seeking publicity or, worse, to be trying to build pressure on the President for a Cabinet appointment. The President has discussed several high-level positions with Clifford in the past year or two—Under Secretary of State and Attorney General were reportedly among them—but Clifford argued successfully that he was more valuable as general adviser, free of administrative responsibility.

Clifford always insisted that he sought no appointment to any office. But most of his associates thought it was endlessly frustrating for him to be halfway in the door of international affairs—for, although he had the President's ear, other men had control of the machinery of government. Clifford, as a private adviser to the President, was spared the administrative and Congressional demands of a Cabinet position, but he was also denied the prestige, the potential for control of affairs, and the historical recognition that accompany Cabinet status.

Now that he is entering the Cabinet, Clifford will no doubt write his name large in foreign policy-making in the coming years. Yet the fullest measure of Clifford's talents is that, while a Cabinet appointment crowns his career, it has

no means overshadows his earlier achievements, for he has been one of Washington's most remarkable figures for 22 years.

He was born on Christmas Day, 1906, in Fort Scott, Kansas, and grew up in St. Louis. His father was an official of the Missouri Pacific Railroad; his mother's brother, Clark McAdams, for whom he was named, was a famous crusading editor of The St. Louis Post Dispatch. He studied law at Washington University in St. Louis and in 1930 joined a leading law firm there. The next year he married Margery Pepperell Kimball of Boston, whom he met while touring Europe in the summer of 1929.

One of Clifford's friends in St. Louis was James K. (Jake) Vardaman, the Mississippi Senator's son, who was a businessman and friend of Senator Harry Truman. When Truman became President in April, 1945, he summoned his friend Jake Vardaman to be White House Naval Aide. Vardaman in turn summoned his friend Clifford—then a naval officer stationed in San Francisco—to be the Naval Aide's aide. Clifford was then 38 years old and had met Truman only twice, both times very casually.

Clifford's swift rise to intimacy with Truman was based on the same qualities of self-assurance and political judgment that have marked his career ever since. He first caught the eye of Judge Samuel I. Rosenman, Roosevelt's Special Counsel, who had stayed on to help Truman. Clifford began helping the overworked Rosenman with speech-writing and legal matters. Truman soon took a liking to the young naval officer, and in January 1946, when Vardaman was promoted to the Federal Reserve Board, Clifford (who was still in uniform) became the President's Naval Aide.

The one event that probably did most to win Clifford the President's favor came in May 1946 when two railroad unions rejected Truman's demand that they call off a nationwide strike. Truman, infuriated, decided to ask Congress for tough strike-breaking authority and to seek national support with a radio address. He scribbled out a speech and gave it to Charlie Ross, his press secretary, to have typed. Ross, Truman's friend since childhood, read the speech in horror: it was shrill, rambling, undignified and corny.

Ross convinced Truman the speech needed revision, and Clifford was called in and given that delicate assign-

ment. Clifford's version, while still exceedingly tough, had a dignity and a logic that was lacking in Truman's draft. Truman delivered this version to a dramatic joint session of Congress, the unions capitulated and the Administration won a great victory. Truman realized that Ross and Clifford had saved him from a serious blunder. A few weeks later, Truman promoted Clifford again, this time to be his Special Counsel.

Another of Clifford's important contributions came in the fall of 1946 when John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, threatened to break an agreement with the Government and call a crippling, nationwide strike. A heated debate broke out within the Administration. Many urged the President to compromise with Lewis. Clifford was the leader of those who urged a fight to the finish. He later recalled: "I felt we could not cave in. The President had to meet the challenge and

Clifford emerged as the leader of a group of liberals within the Administration who met weekly to plan how they could influence Truman's course of action; others included Oscar Chapman, then Under Secretary of the Interior, and Leon Keyserling, of the Council of Economic Advisers. Clifford once recalled candidly:

"The idea was that six or eight of us would try to come to an understanding among ourselves on what directions we would like the President to take on any given issue. Then, quietly and unobtrusively, each in his own way, we would try to steer the President in that direction.

"Naturally, we were up against tough competition. Most of the Cabinet and the Congressional leaders were urging Mr. Truman to go slow, to veer a little closer to the conservative line. They held the image of Bob Taft before him like a bogymen. We were pushing the other



AT THE WHITE HOUSE—Soon after Johnson became President, they had a five-hour talk.

fight it through. The debate went on for days. After the matter had been argued strenuously, President Truman decided to fight. And he fought and won."

TRUMAN soon realized that he and his young adviser shared the same unsentimental view of politics. Time after time, in conflicts with adversaries as diverse as John L. Lewis, Thomas Dewey and Joseph Stalin, others would urge Truman to go slow, to compromise, but Clifford would urge him to stand and fight. No advice could have been better calculated to appeal to Truman's own instincts.

way, urging him to boldness and to strike out for new, high ground. He wasn't going to pacify that Republican Congress, whatever he did.

"Well, it was two forces fighting for the mind of the President, that's really what it was. It was completely unpublicized, and I don't think Mr. Truman ever realized it was going on. But it was an unceasing struggle during those two years, and it got to the point where no quarter was asked and none given."

In 1947 Clifford's political judgment told him that Truman's only hope of re-election the next year was to go to the people with a clear-cut liberal record, and in November he

submitted to Truman a remarkable, 43-page memorandum on political strategy.

Clifford's memorandum began: "The basic premise of this memo—that the Democratic party is an unhappy alliance of Southern conservatives, Western progressives, and big-city labor—is very trite, but it is also very true. And it is equally true that the success or failure of the Democratic leadership can be precisely measured by its ability to lead enough members of these three misfit groups to the polls. . . ."

Clifford predicted, correctly, that Dewey would again be the Republican candidate. He then proceeded to his one major miscalculation: "It is inconceivable that any policies initiated by the Truman Administration no matter how 'liberal' could so alienate the South in the next year that it would revolt. As always, the South can be considered safely Democratic. And in formulating national policy, it can be safely ignored."

CLIFFORD feared that Henry Wallace, whom Truman had fired from his Cabinet and who was running on a third-party "Progressive" ticket, might lure a harmful number of liberal votes away from Truman. He wrote of Wallace:

"Wallace's mysticism has increased while his humility has decreased — so now he has a messianic belief that he is the Indispensable Man. Wallace is gambling for high stakes. He hopes to defeat President Truman by splitting the Democratic party and then inherit its leadership so he can be the candidate in 1952.

"Every effort must be made now jointly and at one and the same time — although, of course, by different groups — to dissuade him and also to identify him and isolate him in the public mind with the Communists."

On organized labor: "It is dangerous to assume that labor has nowhere else to go in 1948. *Labor can stay home.* . . . The labor group has always been politically inactive during prosperity. When they are well fed they are not interested. They will probably be well fed in 1948.

"Labor leaders should be invited to the White House to flatter them — but to talk on general issues. To invite advice on specifics, and then not follow it, is to court trouble."

On civil rights: "It would appear to be sound strategy to have the President go as far as he feels he possibly could go in recommending

measures to protect the rights of minority groups."

TRUMAN'S enemies, Clifford wrote, had created a false impression that "everything good about Administration foreign policy is Marshall [General George C. Marshall, then Secretary of State]; everything bad is Truman." To combat this, Truman should make more speeches on foreign affairs, and should announce more foreign-policy decisions himself, rather than letting them be announced at the State Department.

"The public has a tremendous interest in its Chief Executive and is invariably hungry for news about him," Clifford continued. "It does not want those stereotyped gestures so done to death in past years. No one really cares any more about a round-the-world flyer, or the little girl with the first poppy of the Disabled Veterans, or the Eagle Scout from Idaho."

But, he suggested, the President might invite Albert Einstein to lunch at the White House and explain at his next press conference that they had talked about the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Or he might comment to the press about an important current book he was reading.

"A President who is also a candidate must resort to subterfuge," Clifford wrote. "He cannot sit silent; he must be in the limelight. . . . He must resort to the kind of trip Roosevelt made famous in the 1940 campaign — the 'inspection tour.' . . . No matter how much the opposition and the press pointed out the political overtones of these trips, the people paid little attention, for what they saw was the Head of State performing his duties."

CLIFFORD'S memorandum is a classic political document, and it is one that provides brilliant insights into its author's thinking. Clearly, behind Clifford's patient smile and courtly manner is a man who views without illusions the large political forces and petty personal ambitions that men must master who would succeed within the democratic system.

Clifford's advice to Truman on the 1948 campaign is of special interest for the light it casts on his probable advice to Johnson in the 1968 campaign. One wonders, to take only the most obvious parallel, if his suggestion for dealing with the threat of Senator Eugene McCarthy will resemble his advice for handling Henry Wallace — "to dissuade him and also to identify

him and isolate him in the public mind with the Communists."

However cold and calculating Clifford may be politically, he is a man whose personal charm and courtesy have enabled him to operate with a minimum of criticism. In the Truman years, Washington was dazzled by his movie-star looks and his boy-next-door manner; Robert S. Allen and William V. Shannon summed it up nicely in a 1950 book on the Truman Administration: "Glamorous Clark Clifford is one of those people who is too good to be true. His face is too handsome, his blond hair too evenly waved, his smile too dazzling, his voice too resonant, his manner too patently sincere . . . somewhere there must be a flaw, a glaring weakness, an idiosyncrasy. But so far Washington hasn't discovered it."

In recent years, as Clifford has worked in his large, dimly lit office, surrounded by the predictable dark paneling, period furniture and oriental rugs, dispensing advice to presidents of corporations and Presidents of the United States, a regal aura has surrounded him. A veteran newspaperman laughs as he recalls: "Going to see Clark is like appearing before a Supreme Court of one—he gives you that beautiful smile and you know that he understands your problem and he'll solve it for you." A young lawyer described Clifford as "sort of quasi-god."

Quasi-god or not, Clifford is in a position to serve as *deus ex machina* for people he likes. Early last year Hayes Redmon, a young man in his mid-30's who was then Bill Moyers's assistant in the White House, unexpectedly suffered a heart attack. This terrible news had barely reached Redmon's wife when she received a second call. "Mrs. Redmon," an unfamiliar voice said, "this is Clark Clifford. I just want you to know you have nothing to worry about except Hayes's health. If you have any financial problems, I'll take care of them." Redmon recovered his health, and needed no financial assistance, but it is the sort of gesture that is not soon forgotten.

Clifford lives in a large, 150-year-old white farm house on the Rockville Pike, just beyond the Washington suburb of Bethesda, Md. For many years, he would entertain his friends at an annual New Year's party at which he and his wife and daughters would perform political skits and he would deliver a satiric

“Clifford moved quickly from being the fair-haired boy of the liberal press to being the fair-haired boy of the rich corporations.”

State of the Union address. Clifford played tennis in college, but is a golfer now and tries to get in a round every Sunday at the Burning Tree course; now and then President Johnson is his golfing partner.

THE Truman years were a time of growth for Clifford. He had been catapulted from the life of a young St. Louis lawyer to a position where he could influence the lives of millions of people, in America and around the world. The experience sobered and inspired him. One night in October, 1947, he expressed his deepest feelings to his friend David Lilienthal, the idealistic New Dealer who headed the Tennessee Valley Authority for Roosevelt and the Atomic Energy Commission for Truman. Clifford told Lilienthal that before he entered the White House he had always thought that what he wanted out of life was to make a lot of money and to have a big house and a lot of servants. But, Clifford said, after his experience in the White House, he would never again be content with such unimportant goals; making money suddenly seemed less important than using his talents to help create a better America and a better world.

It was a moment of transcendent idealism for Clifford—and it did not last much longer. His devotion to Truman carried him through the campaign of 1948, but after that incredible victory Clifford's mood began to change. He was tired, he was in debt, and he was disgusted by the petty self-seeking he saw throughout the Administration. One night in December, 1948, Clifford had another long talk with Lilienthal, and his state of mind was very different from that expressed 14 months earlier. Lilienthal wrote in his journal:

"Clark seemed tired and very thoughtful. He spoke in a worried tone—quite unusual for him—about the conflict within the President's own family about future policy, between the conservatives and the 'forward-lookers.' He said he was 'tired, awfully tired; not physically, but emotionally, psychologically.' Felt that the lift that came from doing new things, of learning, is no longer there. He spoke of the awful exhibition one sees around the White House of self-seeking, etc., and seemed rather depressed by it, not as if it were something new but that he was getting his fill of it. I was struck with the way he spoke of being in the midst of such great power and influence, and its effect on people, adding, 'Every once in a while I notice it in myself, and I try to drag it out in the open.'"

One day early in 1948 a group of prominent Missouri Democrats urged Clifford to run for the Senate and promised their support if he did. It was a crucial decision, for Clifford as a Senator would inevitably have become a leading Democrat and probably a Presidential contender, but Clifford had by then decided that when he left the White House he would forgo the uncertainties of electoral politics and pursue his first dream—to achieve wealth through the practice of law.

His resignation from the White House in January, 1950, was widely mourned by liberals. The Nation magazine said, "Clifford has been the mainstay of the Fair Deal, the author of its best Presidential speeches, and the originator of its most impressive strategies." The New Republic declared: "Clark Clifford's retirement as Special Counsel further weakens Our Side in the White House . . . Clifford knew the score. In many ways he was the strongest liberal influence in the Presidential entourage. He and Oscar Chapman helped toward fixing the seemingly hopeless Truman 1948 campaign on the polestar of New Dealism."

CLIFFORD moved quickly from being the fair-haired boy of the liberal press to being the fair-haired boy of the rich conservative corporations. He opened a Washington law office and the clients he acquired during his first year of practice included the Radio Corporation of America, Phillips Petroleum, Standard Oil, the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Republic of Indonesia. In April, 1951, David Lilienthal entered in his journal this

vivid picture of Clifford's success:

"Lunched with Clark Clifford. He told me the whole details of his last year, his first year of law practice after leaving the White House. It is a simply unbelievable story. He practices alone; his partner died two and a half months after they began; he hired four young lawyers; five stenographers. In this establishment—a one-man performance—he earned probably as much as any professional man in the country, amusement field included, and more than any lawyer. He said he came out even on the year, after paying off his debts . . . buying a house, outfitting a law office, etc. He was uneasy about what will happen after Truman is out, if he is; wonders if he will keep any of his clients—which is nonsense, as he is a very able man with or without Truman.

"He looks like the wrath of God, 10 years older than two years ago. Troubled with his stomach, his nerves, wakes up at 3 A.M. How can this have happened to him, who never had any limit on how hard he could work. . . . He has a sense of insecurity (financial) that is hard to fathom, considering the facts."

Clifford's success did not lessen when the Republicans took over in 1953 or at any time thereafter. His exact worth is not a matter of public knowledge, but President Johnson told some friends not long ago that Clifford's income for the past year had been \$1.2-million. This figure, which other of Clifford's friends say is probably accurate, only represents his share—albeit the lion's share—of his law firm's gross annual income, and doesn't include his stocks and other holdings. The point cannot be proved, but some lawyers doubt that any other lawyer has consistently made more money from the practice of law than Clifford has. Clifford's four law partners are said to receive about \$200,000 a year. This perhaps compensates for the fact that they don't get their names on the door—the firm remains Clifford & Miller, despite the fact that Edward Miller, his original partner, died in 1950. As soon as his nomination as Secretary of Defense was announced, Clifford said he would completely sever his connection with his law firm, and would dispose of any stocks which conflicted with his post at the Defense Department.

IN Clifford's case, as in the case of numerous other lead-

ing Washington lawyers, the line between political prominence and legal success often seems to be a narrow one. Essentially, Clifford has been a highly specialized lawyer who acted as a policy adviser and political strategist to corporations on their dealings with the Government.

One of his major clients has been the General Electric Corporation, whose response to the Government's price-fixing charges he helped plan a few years ago. Another important client has been duPont, and he helped get the duPont family's extremely favorable settlement in 1962 when it was ordered to divest itself of 63 million shares of General Motors stock.

Another of his clients has been the El Paso Natural Gas Company, which has for several years been locked in a bitter dispute with the Government and the Supreme Court over its acquisition of the Pacific Northwest Pipeline Company; one highlight of this controversy was the Supreme Court's declaration a year ago that the Justice Department had "knuckled under" to El Paso Gas in its negotiations over a divestiture order.

Because Clifford was a behind-the-scenes strategist, not a courtroom lawyer, it is never easy to pinpoint his precise influence on this or that controversy; perhaps it is sometimes overrated. But in general it was his job—as in a different context, it is the President's job—to sense the quiet nuances of this political city, to know the men and moods of the executive branch, the Congress and the Court, to know what can and cannot be accomplished, and when and how, to know what strings to pull, what arguments to advance, what weaknesses to exploit, what alternatives to explore.

In the El Paso Gas case, for example, Clifford first helped the company plan its extremely successful negotiations with the Justice Department; after the Supreme Court had struck down the resulting agreement as contrary to the public interest, Clifford counseled the gas company's current strategy, which is to get a bill through Congress which would have the effect of negating the Supreme Court's ruling on the contested merger.

Clifford and other leading Washington lawyers often advise their corporate clients not to attempt bitter-end resistance to Federal legislation or regulation that seems politically inevitable. This was Clifford's role in 1962 when he counseled the steel execu-

tives not to defy Kennedy on their price increases. But the corporations do not always heed their lawyers' warnings. A few years ago, to take one notable instance, Clifford was representing both the International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation and the American Broadcasting Company. When the two corporate giants proposed to merge, Clifford advised them against it. Unconvinced, they took their business elsewhere, went ahead with the merger, were challenged by the Justice Department, and eventually suf-

fered a costly and controversial defeat.

by their political contacts. This system is by no means limited to Washington.

Yet the system naturally has critics; one of the most outspoken is consumer spokesman Ralph Nader, who says: "It's unconscionable and unethical that these men come out of the White House and use the knowledge and contacts they gained there to enrich themselves. These guys aren't lawyers, they're human information systems. They represent shadow men in the background. If the President wants a hundred businessmen



IN 1948—A Clifford memo to the President outlined Truman's strategy for victory that year.

ferred a costly and controversial defeat.

A question that arises in some minds is whether, given Clifford's well-known intimacy with the President and the White House staff, he and his corporate clients did not inevitably have a special advantage in their dealings with the Government. Government officials who dealt with Clifford and his clients could hardly be unaware that a word from him could do much to advance their careers in or out of government. (It was noted that Larry L. Williams, the Justice Department lawyer who supervised the negotiation of the Government's much-criticized deal with El Paso Gas, later joined Clifford's law firm.)

The tendency in Washington is simply to accept as a fact of political life that lawyers who have worked in the White House, such as Clifford, F.D.R.'s Tom Corcoran and James Rowe, and Kennedy's Myer Feldman, or who are friendly with the President, like Lloyd Cutler, will profit

to support his tax bill, he calls one of these lawyers to round them up. Do you think that is done for free? It's done for information. That's how they make their money—information and access."

TO some liberals, it seems quite clear that men like Clifford and Corcoran, who in their White House days were zealous advocates of the public interest, have in the furtherance of their legal careers sold out to the rich, conservative corporations. To the lawyers involved, the issue is not that simple.

Clifford regards himself as a liberal Democrat. His credentials as a liberal during his Truman years are beyond dispute, and he feels that his convictions on domestic matters (as on foreign affairs) have remained consistent ever since. When, during the Kennedy Administration, he was occasionally called upon for his opinion on domestic legislation, he advocated liberal positions. In the Johnson Administration, when asked for

his views on domestic issues, he has supported increased social-security benefits, Federal housing, aid to education, civil-rights legislation and other liberal programs.

As Clifford sees it, ideology was not involved in his relationships with his corporate clients; rather, he advised them on how to deal with specific problems—tax disputes, mergers, and so forth. If, as some might think, there was an underlying discord in a man's spending half his time advising Democratic Presidents on how to advance the public interest, and the other half advising corporations on how to advance their private interests, it was one which apparently has never bothered Clifford.

DURING the Eisenhower years, as Clifford's wealth and legend grew, he remained close to such influential Democrats as Senator Robert Kerr of Oklahoma (whose friends in the oil and gas industries Clifford often represented), Senator Stuart Symington (whose 1960 bid for the Democratic nomination Clifford managed) and Senator John F. Kennedy, who chose Clifford as his personal lawyer.

During Kennedy's 1960 campaign, he and Clifford had a two-hour discussion of Truman's 1948 race, and Kennedy asked the lawyer to prepare him an analysis of the problems he would face in taking over the executive branch if he won the election. After Kennedy did win, and President Eisenhower suggested that he appoint someone to be a liaison between the old and new Administrations, Kennedy immediately named Clifford.

Kennedy later made Clifford a member, and subsequently chairman, of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, and consulted with him about the proposed reorganization of the C.I.A. following the Bay of Pigs fiasco. Mrs. Kennedy sought Clifford's advice on the legal aspects of her White House restoration. But for all of this, Kennedy offered Clifford no major appointment. Clifford was a decade older than Kennedy, and superficially at least, his style was not the style of the blunt, hard-charging New Frontiersmen.

KENNEDY admired Clifford, but Johnson needed him, and since November, 1963, Clifford has advanced steadily toward the center of national decision-making. In 1964 he was, along with Abe Fortas, Larry O'Brien, Bill Moyers

and a few others, a member of the President's top council of campaign strategists. One instance of Clifford's political advice came during the chaotic week when the British Government fell, Khrushchev was ousted in Russia, and the Chinese set off their first nuclear bomb. The State Department urged that the President in no way try to make political capital out of the tense international situation. Clifford argued, however, that foreign policy was what the campaign against Goldwater was all about and that the President should project himself as a leader who was calm and confident amid the international turmoil—with the obvious implication that the "trigger-happy" Goldwater would be less calm and confident. Johnson did this, quite effectively, in a low-keyed, televised address to the nation on Oct. 18.

In 1965, as the war began to dominate the President's time, it also became Clifford's preoccupation. In December, Clifford and Justice Fortas were the two major non-military figures who spoke against the Christmas bombing pause. Clifford argued, among other things, that to halt the bombing would be to admit that it was immoral, that Hanoi would only interpret the pause as a sign of weakness, that no negotiations would result, and that in the end the doves would argue that the pause wasn't long enough while the military would say it only proved the need for expanded bombing raids.

Clifford's side lost the 1965 debate, but after the 37-day pause ended without results, Johnson decided the pro-pause advocates (who included McNamara, Moyers, and Under Secretary of State George Ball) had misled him, and as their prestige waned, Clifford's soared. Since then, Clifford has continued to oppose bombing pauses, and with more success.

There is much reason to believe that Clifford will prove to be a strong Cabinet executive in the tradition of Forrestal, Dulles and McNamara. Clifford is not going to be awed by the military brass, nor is he likely to be intimidated by Congressional critics.

Most of all, Clifford savors the challenges of today's tension-filled world. He believes his judgment and his experience can help ease those tensions. Today, as he moves from behind the scenes to the center stage of international affairs, the world will be watching to see if he is right. ■



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